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JOURNAL
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THE ARDACHIE CASE¹

BY P. J. M. McEWAN

WHAT follows is a full account of the events at Ardachie Lodge as experienced and witnessed by the writer and three other witnesses during August 1953. This report is substantially the same as that written one day after the various events occurred from notes taken on the days in question and is in three parts. The first outlines the events in the order of their occurrence, the second contains background information and some personal observations, and the third sets out my conclusions.

PART I

Mr and Mrs Mathews (pseudonym) arrived at Ardachie during the morning of 17 August, having travelled overnight from London in order to take up a domestic appointment at the Lodge. They were met at the station by my father, who drove them straight to the house. They and my wife, together with my parents, had met for an interview in London a fortnight earlier as the result of an advertisement in which no mention of our name or address were given. They were both quite unknown to me and they state that neither had ever had any direct knowledge of this estate or village nor been in contact with any person connected with it before their arrival.

At about 10.30 p.m. on the 17th, my wife, my father and myself were in the sitting-room when Mr and Mrs Mathews rushed into ask 'whether there was anything wrong' with their bedroom. They reported that they had gone to bed early (they had been travelling all the previous night) and shortly after Mr M. had fallen asleep Mrs M. heard footsteps ascending the staircase immediately outside their bedroom and fading in the direction of an empty room which lies opposite their own at the head of the staircase. A few minutes later the sequence was repeated, causing Mrs

¹ Supposedly paranormal rapping sounds, when they do occur, are usually recorded in accounts of pre-arranged sittings with 'physical' mediums. They appear but rarely in reports of spontaneous cases. It is rarer still for them to occur completely unexpectedly in the house of a member of the Society well qualified to observe and report on them.

It is felt that sufficient time has now elapsed for the actual names, with two exceptions, to be given. No phenomena in any way related to those recorded by Mr McEwan have since been experienced at Ardachie Lodge.—ED.

M. to rouse her husband. After a brief interval *he* also heard footsteps but coming, he told us, not from the staircase but from the direction of an inside wall, adjacent to, but not in contact with, their beds.

The matter was discussed, and the position of their room noted with especial attention to what lay beneath, and we considered that these sounds might have had a variety of causes. They might have been caused by the starting of the electric generator (to which, of course, Mr and Mrs M. were unaccustomed) or by the cat or our dog, or they might have been the echo of my wife's footsteps as she had gone up and down a staircase in another part of the house about fifteen minutes earlier. We examined these possibilities in turn. Mr and Mrs M. came with us to the back door (at the foot of the suspect staircase) and listened to the generator. They appeared convinced that this was quite a different sound and in any case too distant and continuous. I had myself locked the dog in an outside shed previously. The cat—who obliged us at this point by walking up the stairs—was quite inaudible and had, I believe, only entered the house after the door had been opened to listen to the generator. My wife then retraced her steps up and down the other staircase while Mr and Mrs M., together with my father, listened in their room. They heard nothing. They also remarked that whereas my wife had gone up and down some fifteen minutes earlier they had last heard the steps only a minute or two before coming straight to our sitting-room.

They returned eventually to bed and my father returned to his cottage. The noises did not seem to have unduly alarmed them although they both seemed convinced that only 'human', as opposed to animal or material, footsteps could account for what they had heard.

About twenty minutes later, at approximately 11.30 p.m., my wife and I were in bed when Mr and Mrs M. again appeared. They now seemed definitely frightened and alleged that something 'supernatural' was happening. Apparently soon after they had returned to bed they heard raps coming from the wall behind which Mr M. had previously 'heard' the steps. The raps were distinct, appearing to come from inside the room, three or four at a time followed by a pause and then a repetition. These noises continued while Mr M. got out of bed to feel for the light switch but stopped as soon as the light was turned on.

Mr and Mrs M., my wife and I then came down into the kitchen and, at my suggestion, and with Mr M.'s full approval, he and I went to his room where we sat in total darkness for about ten minutes. We heard nothing.

Mrs M. told us she did not now feel afraid but in order to get some undisturbed sleep they would prefer to sleep in another room. Accordingly, at about midnight, we all went upstairs to prepare the guest room. This is situated in the middle of the house being divided from their first bedroom by two separate flights of stairs and a lower corridor. One wall of the guest-room, however, the one furthest from the door, lies parallel to but separated by a substantial partition from the wall in their previous bedroom from which Mr M. had thought he heard the footsteps and the raps. These architectural details were worked out *after* the following incidents occurred.

As soon as we had reached this room Mrs M. immediately walked across to the furthest wall and placed her head close to it as though listening. She then returned to the doorway where the three of us were standing and in a state of agitation said, 'She's in here. There's a woman in this room.' We all entered and as we did so Mrs M. became as if transfixed, her body stiffening and her gaze centred upon the top corner of the room, *away* from the suspect wall. The light was on. My wife murmured, 'Don't look like that, Mrs Mathews,' and then, 'Take her slowly towards the door.' But Mr M., who was by his wife's side, was immobile. I stood watching the scene before me not wishing to interrupt in any way. Mrs M. appeared to be in a trance, completely oblivious to her surroundings, her gaze fixed rigidly on this corner, her right hand making a beckoning gesture slowly and in her own direction. Mr M. and I both looked in the same direction but saw nothing unusual. After about a minute had elapsed Mrs M. seemed to gather herself together, as if waking from a dream. She looked around, asked us what had happened and what we were all looking at, and then said she had seen 'an old lady with a cap on her head, a shawl around her shoulders and a hand in front of (and hiding) her face, beckoning me to follow her. She had straggling grey hair which looked as if it had been curly in her younger days'. She said her experience had been preceded by a noise like a rush of wings, which had been why she had listened at the wall when she had first entered the room.

We gathered the bedclothes preparatory to going into yet another room. As we did so (Mrs M. and my wife had left us) I remarked to Mr M. that I would have to check in the village to find if any previous female inhabitant of this old house might answer to this rather general description. No thought of any particular person entered my mind as no previous female inhabitant had been seen either by my wife or myself in person or in a photograph. On reaching the kitchen, however, my wife told me that Mrs M.'s

description fitted almost exactly that given her by our previous domestic help (a local girl who left on most friendly terms and was at this time in Glasgow where she had been taken by my father). This was of the wife of the previous owner, Mrs Bennett (pseudonym), hereafter referred to as 'Mrs B.' Mrs B. had died, deranged, about three years earlier in Inverness. She had suffered a long illness in the house before being taken to hospital.

I asked Mrs M., who told us she had never experienced anything of the kind before,¹ whether during her short time at the Lodge in daylight, she had anywhere felt 'strange'. Without hesitation she said that as a matter of fact she had felt 'uneasy' in one place. This is a small piece of ground outside our sitting-room window, once a rock and rose garden, but now rather overgrown. It appears that when she and her husband had gone for an afternoon walk round the property, she had wanted to enter this garden but her husband had tried to prevent her saying that it was private. She had insisted, however, only to find that once in she was very glad to leave as quickly as possible.

It was in this rose-garden, as it used to be called, that Mrs B. had spent most of her time, tending the roses which were her sole interest during the last few years of her life.

Mrs M. now seemed severely affected by her experience, feeling, she said, 'as if all the strength has been washed out of my body'. Mr M. also seemed somewhat distraught, mainly on account of his wife's health.

My wife then suggested that they should rest in the room near our own. This is in the front of the lodge, separated from their first room by two flights of stairs and two corridors, one on the ground floor and one on the first floor. The lights were kept on in the connecting passage and our doors were left open. We did not disturb my father as he was returning to London very early the next day.

Mrs M. said she felt 'happier' here and hoped 'the old b . . . will not follow me'. But within three minutes we were again aroused. Both Mr and Mrs M. had been disturbed by faint taps on the bed-head, slightly above Mrs M.'s head. Mr M. said he thought that this must be caused by a natural movement of the bed and that he had watched closely. (With the door ajar the outside light shines in quite clearly.) The bed-head, he said, remained motionless but the faint taps continued. Thus we again foregathered at the head of the (main) staircase, facing the upper corridor at the end of which, around a slight corner, lies the room in which the vision had been seen. At once Mrs M. showed again the symptoms of

¹ See p. 169.

rigid immobility and fright although this time her normal consciousness remained as she spoke and answered me. She said, 'Come here, Mr McEwan. There she is again. Can't you see her? Now she is crawling on her hands and knees with what looks like a candlestick in one hand. She's outside that room.' I suggested to Mrs M. that she should ask the apparition a question. Mrs M. murmured, 'What's troubling you?' but could say no more. My wife did not look, being too terrified by the appearance of Mrs M. Mr M. and I both peered into the gloom of the corridor (we were on either side of Mrs M.) but neither of us saw anything unusual. Mrs B. then disappeared (Mrs M. gave us an intermittent running commentary) around the corner at the end of the corridor but shortly returned again, still on her hands and knees. (Mrs M. said later that she had no impression of any emotion about Mrs B. She could not say that her vision appeared miserable or worried.) She was now, we were told, crawling towards us. This so frightened Mrs M. that she had to be taken down the front stairway, thus avoiding the corridor. In the kitchen we all discussed the matter and eventually went by car to my father's cottage. My father and I returned to the Lodge at 4.30 a.m. and had no further experiences.

Throughout these events our two young children had remained asleep. The dog, a nursing bitch, had been brought into the house after the first incident. In the morning we found diarrhoea very near the place on the upper corridor where Mrs M. had had her last vision. The dog has never dirtied the house before in this manner, nor as far as I know has she ever had diarrhoea, nor was she present at the time.

The following morning (the 18th) I visited Mrs Thomas, the owner of the adjoining estate and a close friend of the previous owner and his wife. After she had heard my account she told me that toward the end of Mrs B.'s life she was a paralytic who had been in the habit of crawling on her hands and knees. She always wore a red hat and what might be mistaken for a shawl. On one occasion Mrs Thomas told me she had had to collect Mrs B. whom she found crawling around the rose-garden after darkness had fallen. (We were told later that Mrs B. 'turned night into day'.) Mrs Thomas also recounted that a considerable amount of jewellery belonging to Mrs B. disappeared at different times. As a result of this Mrs B. was in the habit of hiding things all over the house which she was often unable to find later.

When I returned to the Lodge, at about 10.15 a.m., Mrs M. reported that while in the kitchen she had heard footsteps along the lower corridor passing the (open) kitchen door. Thinking that

she was alone in the house with the two children (aged three and eighteen months) she had thought it must be the baby, only to find him strapped securely in his pram. My daughter was beside her as she stood listening and she had asked Mrs M. what she was looking at.

Nothing further occurred that day. At about 9.30 p.m. Mr and Mrs M. retired to bed, having moved to their own downstairs kitchen where Mrs M. seemed to feel comparatively happy. This room is at the foot of the stairs up which the first steps had supposedly been heard. Although they had resolved not to leave this room, at about 9.45 Mrs M. remembered that they had forgotten to bring in the milk (always left on the back table in the evening by my shepherd). As she moved towards the door Mr M. heard raps coming from the direction of the door and as the door was opened Mrs M. immediately saw Mrs B. at the foot of the staircase. She described what she had seen as a 'wreath' (presumably she meant 'wraith') and was again unable to discern any clear features. It seemed, she said, barely a human figure at all. Mrs M. also spoke of lights around the 'wreath'. Mrs M. rushed back into the room and slammed the door. We then evacuated the Lodge for the night, taking the children with us.

Nothing untoward occurred that night (18th/19th). On the night of the 19th/20th sharp raps were again repeatedly heard, first by Mrs M. and later by both her and her husband, in their kitchen. These were four in number with a short interval between each series and ceasing altogether when the light was turned on. Before they eventually fell asleep a total of between twenty and thirty raps were heard. Contrary to the request I had made, they did not disturb me as they preferred, they told us, not to disturb and frighten my wife after her previous anxiety and sleeplessness. As their future rested largely in her hands I am satisfied that this is a reasonable explanation.

The following night (20th/21st) raps were heard continuously in the same room, first by Mr M., who sat listening in bed for about twenty minutes before waking his wife who then also heard them until they eventually both fell asleep, again without disturbing us. On this occasion they reported that the raps continued unchanged after the light was put on. Mrs M. had replied by a succession of quick taps but they did not ask the 'tapper' to reply according to an agreed code, as I had previously suggested they might.

After the events that had occurred during three of the first four nights that Mr and Mrs Mathews had been with us, it was with some relief that on the fifth night (21st/22nd) we were visited at my suggestion by Mr J. D. Matheson and Mr R. Ross, O.B.E., both members of the S.P.R.

After dinner Mr Matheson and Mr Ross had a long and friendly conversation with the M.s in their room. Mrs M. offered to place herself in a position to evoke phenomena, even to the extent of inducing trance, an offer that was not encouraged. She added that as she had sat for about ten minutes in the rose-garden that afternoon she expected further phenomena to occur that evening. At about half past ten Mr Mathews announced that rappings had begun. The following account of what happened that evening is taken from Mr Ross's report, substantiated in all important particulars by both Mr Matheson and myself.

'The entire adult household assembled in the Mathews' room. This was about twelve by fourteen feet. A single bed was ranged against the inner wall, its head flush with the other wall. On the opposite side of the room a divan was ranged against the outer, window wall. Between the bed-heads there was a Raeburn stove diffusing a genial warmth. The fire-door of the stove was at first fully open; later it was partly closed. A large easy chair, placed diagonally and facing inwards, stood near the foot of the bed. It commanded the centre of the room. Mrs M. sat in this chair. Mr M. sat on the opposite bed. I was also sitting on this bed. The others were disposed between the bed-head and the door. The light was fully on. We waited ten minutes or so but nothing happened. Then the light was extinguished. The glow from the cooker relieved the darkness. Very soon rappings were heard from the window wall. They sounded like the percussive effect of knuckles on wood. They were of medium strength and of slowish tempo, usually three raps at a time with a second's interval between the individual raps. The interval between the groups was fairly prolonged. Sighs from Mrs M. more or less synchronized with the incidence of the noises. I saw Mrs M. move from the centre of the chair to its arm contiguous to the edge of the bed. She was by now slightly slewed round in a quarter-turn facing the door. She appeared to become transfixed. A lit cigarette dropped from her right hand on to the carpet. Her two arms hung rigid by her side. Her attention was focussed, glassily, on the open door. She continued to stare in that direction then screamed, recoiled and fell back on the bed. Lights were put on. Mrs M. raised herself in a few seconds and in a reasonably calm voice, though emotionally tired, said that she had seen the figure of a woman enter the room. She had seen the face clearly. It was that of a "younger [sic] woman" and the eyes were most striking. Nobody else saw anything. She said that her heart was racing as anybody could tell by feeling her pulse. Mr Matheson did so and told us later that it appeared to him to be strong and normal.

'We now left the Mathews to rest. A few minutes later Mr M. returned and invited us back. By this time Mrs M. had gone to bed. I took up a position at the foot of the bed. Mr Matheson did the same but nearer to the wall. Mr and Mrs McEwan sat on the opposite bed. Mr M. was between the two beds. Mrs M. lay partly on her back. She was breathing heavily. It was again made dark. Raps soon began to be heard. Presently Mrs M. roused herself and half sat up, muttering something about "the rose-tree . . . neglected . . .". [My report states: 'Mrs M., with the lights on, slowly sat up in bed, asked her husband if she had been dreaming and said something about a "rose-tree" and "neglect". Then "It's coming to me now—someone has moved a rose-tree"—P.J.M.M.] She appeared to be non-plussed by the subject and there was a dream-like timbre in her voice. But she lay down again, this time on her left side, facing the wall. Her left hand was rigid and upright beside the pillow next the wall. Her right hand lay hidden beneath the coverlet. Rappings on the wall by the window began again. On the onset of one of these groups Mr Matheson flashed his torch on the wall. The position of Mrs M.'s left hand was unchanged. I saw no suspicious movement of the right hand or of the blanket covering it but I do not exclude the possibility that I may have missed it. The flashing of the torch disturbed Mrs M. who half rose up and appeared a trifle distressed. We decided to abandon the sitting but Mr M. promised to let us know if anything further happened. We were not called again although we heard afterwards that the raps had continued until 5 a.m. Mr Matheson and I retired at about 3 a.m. to sleep in the guest-room where the first apparition was reported. We neither saw nor heard anything unusual. Next morning, on saying a friendly good-bye to Mrs M. she confided to us that the appearance the night before was that (or like that) of Mrs McEwan but she had not said so for fear of alarming her.'

Mrs M.'s remark about a rose-tree seems extremely significant on any hypothesis. The incident surely referred to is that on our arrival I had instructed the part-time gardener to remove a rose-tree from the greenhouse. (N.B. This is quite separate and away from the rose-garden evidently so much in Mrs M.'s mind.) This rose-tree and a peach tree were the only inhabitants of the greenhouse when we came and I wanted to make room for tomato plants. Within a week of its removal Mrs Thomas, our neighbour, visited us for the first time and in the course of conversation had told us that the rose-tree in the green-house was Mrs B.'s favourite tree, a very beautiful early flowering variety that we should look after with

care. We did not tell her that it had already been removed from its home, nor did we tell her (nor anyone else in the area) that it had apparently died shortly afterwards. During the time the M.s were with us the gardener was on holiday and did not come at any time. My wife is confident that she had not mentioned this incident to either Mr or Mrs M. To us it had been a very minor incident in a busy life, long forgotten. The Mathews, however, were quite definite, when I asked them separately, that nothing about this tree (which they said they didn't know existed and which would certainly not be noticed) was known to them.

The following night (22nd/23rd), Mr Matheson and Mr Ross having returned home, my wife and I sat with the Mathews in their room. As nothing happened with the light on I suggested we should sit in darkness and that, as she must be tired, Mrs M. should get into bed. This was agreed and soon taps were heard, very faintly, coming from the direction of the window and at about bed height. Mr M. came across and sat beside his wife, at our suggestion holding her hands. Each time the sounds, in series of three, were heard I endeavoured to close in upon the place hoping to shine the torch as soon as I could be certain that I had located the exact 'source' and hoping to interrupt a series. Twice I was within a few inches of the wall and each time Mrs M. disturbed the procedure. On the first occasion I shone the torch as it was almost touching the wall directly above the bed and about parallel to where I imagined Mrs M.'s knees would be. Mrs M. jumped up and very quickly said that she sensed a pressure on the bed-clothes. I did not think that I had touched the bed. The impression was forced upon me that the disturbance had been designed (deliberately?) to withdraw my attention from what Mrs M., consciously or unconsciously, believed I might have seen. On the second occasion I was slowly drawing closer from my position in the middle of the room and was within a foot of the wall when Mrs M. again rose up saying this time that she thought she saw a shadow at the window and the curtains moving. At the time I concluded that she was fabricating an excuse to find out exactly where I was and what I was doing but, as so often, her behaviour could be neatly fitted into a number of variant explanations.

On both these occasions my head was very close to the wall from where the sounds seemed to be emanating but apart from the raps I heard and felt nothing. When the room was illuminated twitchings and jerks of Mrs M.'s clenched fist were observed. These movements had already been noticed, although to a lesser degree, the previous evening. Mr M. also noticed these spasms,

saying that his wife always jerked in her sleep, particularly when she was 'strung up'.

At one point during this 'session' Mrs M. sat up in bed apparently gazing at some invisible object but after a moment had passed she told us she had been dreaming. She had dreamed (?) of a very long corridor, empty. My wife heard Mrs M. murmur, 'It's him!' It is possible that this time Mrs M. 'saw' me (see notes below).

While we were all still in this room I decided that owing to lack of sleep and general exhaustion I would have to take my wife and children away the following day. Then, after we had left we were told later that two very loud raps were heard on the door. Mrs M. remarked to her husband that this was the 'spirit' saying goodbye. The fact that after my wife had left the house and until the M.s left us on the 29th nothing further occurred may be significant.

To complete the account I add, for what it is worth, a report of two small incidents.

A day before the M.s left us it was necessary to change one of their mattresses. As the mattress from Mr M.'s bed was about to be lifted Mrs M. was seen (by a friend of my mother who had just arrived) to remove what seemed to resemble a book or square box. It was also noticed that what looked like an old-fashioned pair of bellows lay under Mr M.'s bed.

On another occasion when I was taking the M.s to an interview my mother found that although the main doors of the Lodge were unbolted, the window and door of the M.s' room had been locked.

It was with regret and to the apparent disadvantage of everyone concerned that I took the Mathews to meet the Glasgow train on the 29th August, en route for London.

PART 2

Information

1. Mrs M. is aged between 40 and 50, has one son and one adopted (?) Jewish son. She is partly French, partly Scottish and has other nationalities among her near forebears. She has been twice married and is unstable, excitable, practical and efficient, and of average intelligence.

2. Mr M. is of about the same age and is a mill-wright by trade. He seems an extremely willing, able, mild and honest man who would certainly do anything for his wife.

3. My wife, aged 30, is a graduate and well trained in the handling and judgment of people.

4. I am aged 30, a graduate of Edinburgh University, where I read Psychology. I have been a member of the S.P.R. since 1951.

5. We purchased the estate in December 1952 from Mr B., an elderly gentleman who had inherited the property from his wife and who was forced to part with it as his son had little interest in the land.

6. Mrs B. died at an advanced age about three years ago in Inverness. Everyone spoke highly of her generosity. She was latterly a paralytic who towards the end of her life became deranged to the extent that her husband was forced to have her removed to hospital, where she died.

7. Mr and Mrs Mathews burned all their boats behind them when they came to us. Mr M. was a London postman and his wife a housekeeper. Mr M. had forfeited the right to his superannuation and pension upon resigning. All their furniture is stored in London, where they had worked for seventeen years. The reason they gave for leaving London was the health of Mrs M. They told us they had arrived at the Lodge with £3.10.0 in their pockets. (There is no doubt in my mind that their emotions during all these troubling experiences were those of fear and worry lest we be compelled to ask them to leave. On several occasions both were in tears.)

8. Mrs M. had worked for some years in the house of a leading psychiatrist who she alleged once told her she was 'psychic'. Although she had said at first that she had never in her life experienced anything similar she later told us that 'at the age of seven she had seen a vision of her grandfather 'sitting up in bed'. Two weeks later, she said, he died sitting up in bed.

9. Mr M. independently confirmed that his wife has had no similar experience as far as he knows. He himself has always been a convinced sceptic in these matters dismissing them, he said, as 'hooy'.

10. The Abbot of the nearby Abbey told my wife that in the thirty years he has been associated with the village he had never heard that Ardachie was haunted. Nor had our neighbour.

11. Nevertheless, shortly after we came here in 1952, my wife and I had been told by a retired House of Commons policeman who worked here part-time for Mr B. (who at that time lived in the Lodge alone) that Ardachie was haunted. He states that one morning he was cleaning the fires in the lower kitchen when he heard footsteps along the bottom corridor. As Mr B. was never up at that hour he went outside the door to see who it could be. The footsteps passed in front of him without any visible agency and he literally ran away to tell the gamekeeper who lives in an adjoining cottage.

12. During their few hours here before darkness on August

17th, the Mathews made one visit to the village, accompanied by my father. They went only to the grocers and spoke only to the counter-hand who is not a local man.

13. Our dog is a house dog who would most certainly bark at the approach of a stranger without or within.

14. Mrs M. had the beginning of a menopausal period, her first for several months, on her arrival.

15. Before the 'vision' of the 22nd (of my wife) it may be interesting that Mrs M. presented my wife with a gift. As a result I afterwards explained, for the benefit of Mrs M. (after the rose-tree incident), that if B.'s spirit was angered at all it was angered *with me* since the removal of the rose-tree was my decision and contrary to the advice of my wife. The interesting point is that the following day Mrs M. presented *me* with a thermometer and that night my wife heard the suggestive murmur, 'It's him.'

16. A sister of Mrs Mathews was on holiday in Fort Augustus the previous year. As a possible source of information I checked with the hotel. This woman stayed only one night.

17. The psychology of testimony seems relevant in this case, particularly with regard to the raps. The opportunity to examine Mr M.'s reliability was not forthcoming. But I consider he was readily open to suggestion by his wife and, to a lesser degree, by others. Whether the degree was sufficient to account for his story of raps heard in the light and six feet away from where they were both in bed remains questionable. I believe it is possible but do not feel prepared to go further.

PART 3

Conclusions

In considering the evidence, I incline to the following opinions. In cases of this nature, where the circumstances suggest some neurotic disturbance that *may* at some points coincide or collate with psychic phenomena, the smallest detail is relevant. It is therefore probable that some activities or phrases or apparently unimportant items of personal history that seemed insignificant at the time may have been omitted. I believe, however, that the reader of this report will be in possession of all the events that are in my mind as I draw certain tentative conclusions. All he cannot have are the impressions that only an observer can obtain.

1. I exclude conscious fraud with or without the collusion of Mr M. for the following reasons. It would be directly contrary to all the interests of Mr and Mrs M. who sacrificed financial and domestic security in order to take up the appointment. People of

this type and background frequently make such important decisions impulsively without the deliberation others might make. The view that they were seeking publicity seems to me untenable, as also the hypothesis that they were compelled to leave London without delay, since in the first case both seemed very much concerned with village gossip, on account of which (they said) neither of them visited it after the initial phenomena until the day before their departure. In the second case subsequent enquiries have confirmed the main points of the M.s' story for leaving.

2. The presentation and sequence of events has been, in my view, too natural and reasonable for the knowledge of Mrs M. to fabricate (however acquired) and too logically constructed and faithfully enacted for their intelligence to produce or their histrionic abilities to simulate.

3. It seems highly improbable that the extensive information that would have been required for any exclusively psychological explanation was available to the Mathews before or after their arrival. Ardachie is one mile from a village and half a mile from a public road. The possibility of visits or visitors unknown to my wife and I can be altogether excluded, even supposing the least reason existed suggesting the possibility. The visit of Mrs M.'s sister and brother-in-law to Fort Augustus fourteen months earlier seems to me, for the reasons I have given, to be of no importance.

4. That Mrs M. is psychologically unbalanced is as clearly suggested both by the evidence and by observation as is her husband's probity and honesty. She has had a remarkable number of potentially traumatic experiences of which the first alone—being brought up by a step-mother who, she said, hated her—might have been sufficient to cause the deepest unresolved conflicts.

5. All the manifestations centred around the personality of Mrs M. But this could be accounted for on several hypotheses. What occurs to me as equally significant is the fact that their cessation coincided with my wife's departure from the house and that their ending was 'heralded' by the two loud raps, heard *after* the decision to evacuate the family had been made.

6. With regard to the raps I feel reasonably satisfied that those I heard (on the two successive nights) were caused by Mrs M.'s own body acting without her conscious knowledge. I find it difficult, however, to equate this belief with Mr M.'s apparent sincerity in stating that he had heard similar but louder sounds when the room was lit, that he and his wife had sat watching the exact place from which they seemed to emanate for several minutes, and that on the first night he was nestling close to his wife in bed six feet away from the wall.

7. Whether Mrs M. actually experienced the visions she described and whether her trance was genuine seem to me to be matters of minor importance. The important question is surely not the *form* but the *material* of the experiences. *Why* was it an old lady with a cap on her head and a shawl, why a *crawling* vision, why feel uneasy in the rose-garden, why see a 'wreath' so suddenly on the back stairs and why allude to a rose-tree that no one would normally notice and whose recent history almost no one knows? The cumulative association with Mrs B. is too great to allow an explanation in terms of pure coincidence. We have strong evidence for a neurosis. An additional explanation must, it seems to me, be sought in terms of either (*a*) prior knowledge (which it is almost impossible to exclude conclusively) or (*b*) some paranormal activity, possibly evoked by the turbulent state of the subconscious mind of Mrs M.

8. My conclusion, which I have done my best to base on a reasonable appraisal of the facts, and with no strongly held views or motives which might tend to unfairly emphasise evidence in favour of any particular explanation, is that paranormal activity occurred and that it was made possible by the mental state of Mrs M. This seems to me the most reasonable conclusion but I do not regard it as in any way conclusive. There is evidence for several divergent hypotheses. The one offered seems to me to possess the least number of inherent contradictions and to account for the greatest number of facts with most economy.

THE OLIVER LODGE POSTHUMOUS TEST OF SURVIVAL

SOME COMMENTS

BY ROBERT H. THOULESS, SC.D.

Now that the sealed package of Sir Oliver Lodge has been opened and its contents compared with the statements about them made by mediums, there will no doubt be discussion as to whether or not the correspondences are or are not greater than could reasonably be attributed to chance. There is little doubt that an argument can be presented on either side. But it must not be overlooked that the fact that there can be such discussion and division of opinion implies that the experiment has failed in its main object, for the evidence that it has produced is only of the same kind as that produced in ordinary sittings with mediums. The point of

doing an experiment is to produce something better, something which approaches as near as possible to an unambiguous proof that something was communicated that could not be explained as coincidence or as due to the paranormal powers of the medium but must be attributed to Sir Oliver Lodge communicating.

It was believed by Sir Oliver Lodge that this would be proved if he could after his death communicate through a medium the substance of the account of his finger habit as described in the inside envelope of his test material. Whether this belief was justified or not, it is clear that the communication he intended was not made. The evidence produced was of the same kind as that of spontaneous mediumistic communications and was evidentially of less force than the most striking spontaneous communications. It does not, therefore, take us any further than we were before. In other words, it has failed in its primary object as an experiment.

The moral of this failure is that we must use a better type of posthumous test in future. As a first step, we may consider some of the points at which Sir Oliver Lodge's test went wrong.

One obvious defect was that too much information was given away in the envelopes leading up to the final one. On these were written hints to be given to the communicator in case he found difficulty in remembering the final message. The fear of a possible failure of memory was a reasonable one, but it is difficult to feel sure that the fact of the final message being something about an exercise in music might not have been rationally inferred from the hints given on the last few envelopes. If so, a combination of rational inference and lucky accident might have led to something so nearly right as to make judgment as to its paranormality very uncertain.

I believe that this system of hints was largely an afterthought, and that Sir Oliver did not sufficiently realize how much he was giving away. The possibility of the memory of a discarnate spirit working somewhat imperfectly must certainly be considered, but this way of jogging the communicator's memory is dangerous to the purpose of the experiment. The moral for the posthumous experimenter is, I think, that the design of the experiment should be decided as a whole at one time and that one should not modify it afterwards.

Secondly, there is the obvious difficulty that the experiment as designed by Sir Oliver Lodge rests on the assumption that the medium cannot by any paranormal process discover what is in a sealed envelope unless this is known to some person (living or departed). This was a reasonable and widely held assumption when Sir Oliver Lodge designed his experiment. Since then,

however, evidence has accumulated at Duke Parapsychology Laboratory and elsewhere that paranormal cognition can also take place under clairvoyant conditions (i.e. when no one knows the target object at the time the report is made). So even if mediums had succeeded in giving a full account of what was inside the last envelope, it would not have followed that Sir Oliver Lodge was communicating it ; the mediums might have discovered it by their own clairvoyant capacities.

We cannot at present get over this difficulty by designing a target which can certainly not be attained by clairvoyance since we have no certain knowledge of what are the limits of clairvoyant cognition. It probably has limits and some day we may know what they are. It seems best to devise a type of target which may be beyond the limits of clairvoyant cognition but, instead of assuming that it is so, try whether mediums can discover the target while the experimenter is still alive. If they cannot, but can succeed after his death when he is ostensibly communicating, that would provide strong ground for supposing that the task was beyond their unaided paranormal powers and that the solution was really being communicated by the departed experimenter. It would not, of course, be coercive proof (other explanations of the differential effect could be thought of) but in this field any evidence we can obtain is likely to fall short of coercive proof.

This could not, however, be done with a sealed package test because this method would require that one could check an indefinitely large number of attempts at solution of the problem. The checking of a sealed envelope test involves opening the envelope after which the test is spoiled. A different type of test is required which can be checked an indefinitely large number of times without being spoiled.

A third difficulty of the Oliver Lodge test was the uncertainty of the living experimenters as to when the communicator could be supposed to have got his message through so that the last envelope could be opened. Ideally one might hope the communicator would say after some sitting : 'You have got the message now and the final envelope can be opened.' Nothing so definite as this happened in the Lodge sittings. Although in a sitting on 8 December 1953 the communicator, in reply to a question, said that the time had come to open the final envelope, this instruction was accompanied by a comment that he had not succeeded in getting much through. Even when this instruction is given in a test of this type, there is the difficulty that it may have been wrongly given, either by the unwitting mental activity of the medium herself or by some communicator who was not really Sir Oliver Lodge. As a result

of the uncertainty as to when to conclude the experiment, the scripts became uncomfortably numerous so that, at the end, the likelihood of some chance correspondences between the scripts and the contents of the last envelope may have been large and was difficult of assessment.

The only remedy for this seems to be the one suggested for the previous difficulty, that an indefinitely large number of checks should be possible without spoiling the test. Then uncertainty as to when the final message comes through would be unimportant; any suggestion that is received can be tried out at any time.

I was trying to meet these difficulties when I devised the cipher test (described in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R., 48, 253-63 and 342-3), in which the target is the key to a message in cipher. I think this is nearer to the ideal posthumous test than anything else at present available but I do not imagine that it is the final solution to the problem. Particularly I am aware of the defect that it might be difficult for the communicator to remember the necessary key words. Originally I had intended to leave with the S.P.R. a picture which would serve to jog my memory, but I have decided not to do so since this would weaken the evidential value of the test to an unknown extent. I cannot be sure that what would suggest the key to me might not also suggest it to someone else. Other members of the S.P.R. may think of better ways of surmounting the difficulties in posthumous tests that I have mentioned. The main requisite, I think, is that a satisfactory test must be one which allows for an indefinite number of checks without spoiling the test.

'SCIENCE AND THE SUPERNATURAL'

THIS is the title of an article by Dr G. R. Price which appeared in the 26 August issue of *Science*, published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington, D.C. Its author is a research associate in the Department of Medicine, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Dr Price is not the first scientist to find himself unable to accept research findings that are, in Dr Rhine's words, 'radically contradictory to contemporary thought.' What is interesting about his article is that (1) it appears in a leading scientific journal, (2) unlike so many critics of parapsychology, he has made a thorough and careful study of the literature, and (3) he has concluded that the hypotheses of sensory cues, recording errors, unconscious whispering, statistical artifacts and the like are all untenable and that the only alternative to accepting the results is to assume wholesale fraud and collusion.

Unprejudiced readers of *Science* may well be less impressed by Dr Price's own hypothesis than by his rejection of the others.

The summary of the article given below is printed by kind permission of Dr Price and the Editor of *Science*. It is followed by the reply sent by Dr Soal for publication in that journal. In the summary, for which we are indebted to Mr Christopher Scott, and in Dr Soal's reply the references have been omitted for reasons of space.—ED.

SUMMARY OF ARTICLE BY DR G. R. PRICE

During the last 15 years scarcely a single scientific paper has appeared attacking the work of the parapsychologists. In the face of improved experimental techniques, opposition has been virtually silenced.

ESP, if real, cannot be dismissed as unimportant. Though the scoring rate is low, communication theory shows that, by appropriate coding and reiteration, such a faculty can be used to transmit messages with any desired degree of accuracy. The existence of such a simple and cheap means of reliable communication would have obvious practical value.

ESP is more than a surprising new observation. It differs radically from other natural phenomena in that we cannot even imagine a mechanistic theory, however much we assume, which would give a detailed account of its operation. Here the main difficulties include the manipulation and direction of the faculty (how do we pick out a 'red' card in a dark room? how do we locate the pack of cards 100 miles away?), and the problem of how the brain can interpret the raw data of ESP. Moreover, what explanation is conceivable for precognition?

The seemingly direct action of psi, without the intervention of detailed mechanisms, distinguishes the phenomena from those of science and leaves no alternative explanation but the spirit hypothesis. Thus parapsychology, though camouflaged with scientific trappings, still bears in abundance the markings of magic.

'If, then, parapsychology and modern science are incompatible, why not reject parapsychology? We know that the alternative hypothesis, that some men lie or deceive themselves, fits quite well within the framework of science. The choice is between believing in something "truly revolutionary" and "radically contradictory to contemporary thought" and believing in the occurrence of fraud and self-delusion. Which is more reasonable?'

In some of Rhine's work and most of Soal's every explanation has been effectively eliminated except ESP or fraud. While everyone knows that deceptions and hoaxes, simple and elaborate, do occur, we are most reluctant to believe that any particular person, especially someone we know, can be guilty of organizing a deliberate deception. Yet the literature shows that the most intelligent and eminent men have been deceived by trickery. In judging the likelihood of fraud, we

should ignore vague, psychological criteria and base our reasoning (1) on such evidence as would impress a court of law, and (2) on purely statistical considerations; we should ask, not whether it is probable that the given individual (not known to us personally) would commit a fraud, but whether it is probable that there should exist anywhere in the world of over 2 billion inhabitants a few people of the desire and ability to produce false evidence for the supernatural.

Dr Price then goes on to consider the work of Soal, as that which has generally been held the most impressive, and to 'demonstrate that Soal *could* have cheated if he wanted to, and that therefore we should demand better evidence than his before we believe in the supernatural . . . it should be clearly understood that I am not here stating that Soal or any of his associates was guilty of deliberate fraud. All that I want to do is show that fraud was easily possible.'

' . . . if I were myself to attempt to duplicate his results, this is how I would proceed. . . . I'd want four confederates to imitate the Shackleton experiments. For imitating the Stewart series, I'd probably want three or four. . . . In recruiting, I would appeal not to desire for fame or material gain but to the noblest motives, arguing that much good to humanity could result from a small deception designed to strengthen religious belief.'

As regards procedures, 'Like a competent medium, I would want several alternatives available, so that any sceptic who suspected one procedure could be confronted by a repetition performed under conditions making the suspected procedure impossible. . . . At about 90 per cent of my sittings, the original sequences [of random numbers] would be taken from lists provided by me. Here are a few of the possibilities :

'*Procedure 1.* The Percipient and the Agent are "in the trick". The Agent arranges the [five] code cards as previously directed by me, and the Percipient writes down a memorized sequence or takes a list from a drawer if no outsider is watching him. (This would be a preferred procedure in most experiments except when an outsider determined the order of the code cards. It could succeed with outsiders as EA and EP.)

'*Procedure 2.* The Percipient and the Agent (or the EA or an observer) are "in the trick". The code card order is determined by an outsider. The Agent (or the EA or an observer) notes this order, classifies it into 1 of 6 groups, and signals the group number to the Percipient before or after the run. . . . For example, the Agent glances at the backs of the cards and then says : "Ready." "All ready." "Yes, I'm ready." "Yes, ready."—And so forth. The Percipient then takes from a drawer the designated guess sheet, which is already filled out in his hand writing. . . .

'*Procedure 3.* The Percipient and the Agent are "in the trick". The Agent notes the card order and signals it . . . before the start of the run. The Percipient has memorized a number sequence, and he uses the card order to encipher each number mentally. (This can work with

outsiders watching both the Agent and the Percipient and shuffling the code cards ; or if the Agent is an outsider, the signalling can be done by an observer who shuffles the cards.)

'Next consider some of the procedures that could be used even when the number sequence was not known to me in advance :

'*Procedure 4.* The Percipient and the Agent are "in the trick". They have copied or memorized the same lists of letter symbols. During the run the Agent records (concealed by the box) the numbers corresponding (precognitively) to the letters that he knows the Percipient is guessing, and at the end he rearranges the code cards to give the desired degree of success. . . .

'*Procedure 5.* The Percipient and the EA are "in the trick". The EA learns the order of the code cards and signals information to the Percipient during the run. The Percipient has memorized a random sequence of letter symbols. The EA, in calling out the serial numbers, slightly alters his voice or timing a few times during each run (5 times per 50 trials to give 14 hits). Ordinarily the Percipient is to guess at random, but at each signal he writes down the next letter on the memorized sequence. (I would use this method particularly in experiments when an outsider who wore glasses served as Agent. Then the preferred experimental arrangement would be that in which the cards are turned face up for 30 seconds, the screen aperture would be located as it was in the Stewart sittings, and the lighting would be so arranged that the EA could see the cards by reflection in the Agent's glasses.)

'*Procedure 6.* The Percipient plus the EA, the *Recorder*, or the Agent are "in the trick". In runs where the number sequence is generated by counters, I would have the EA draw counters of the needed colour at particular points, or the Recorder could keep false records of counters drawn. And in some experiments, procedures 1, 4, or 5 could be used.

'The procedures that could give the highest degree of success, and that thus would be chosen when I wanted simultaneous " -1 " and " $+1$ " or " -2 " and " $+2$ " successes, are procedures 1 and 3. For long-distance experiments, procedures 1 and 4 would work. Or I could employ procedure 2 by telephoning the Percipient after the sitting to tell him which lists to mail in.

'Many other procedures are possible. The six chosen for description were selected as samples of what can be done by simple means. Mental abilities required are similar to those needed for playing bridge competently, except that some collaborators would need a little memory training. Use of special apparatus or of collaborators with the abilities of a good stage conjuror would open up numerous new possibilities. Thus it should be clear that Soal's work was *not* conducted "with every precaution that it was possible to devise." '

Dr Price goes on to ask why, though much more nearly fraudproof tests can be devised, none has ever been carried out, and no clear demonstration has ever been made before 'hostile, pig-headed, and sceptical critics.' He discusses and criticizes the answers to this question that have been offered by parapsychologists. Finally he describes a

number of tests which would provide sufficiently conclusive proof of various types of ESP. These tests would be carried out under the direction of (but for the most part not in the presence of) a committee of 12, including 'two experimental psychologists, two experimental physicists, one statistician, and three conjurors or other experts on trickery—all prominent men and all strongly hostile towards parapsychology. . . . Then probably most scientists would . . . be prepared to believe in psi phenomena in preference to believing that the entire committee was dishonest or deluded. In addition . . . the chairman of the committee should be a person with a record of success in psi experimentation, for it is claimed . . . that the personality of the chief experimenter may in some psychic manner determine success or failure. . . .' We then design tests 'such that the presence of a single honest man in the "jury" will ensure the validity of the test, even if the other 11 members should co-operate in fraud.'

The appropriate test for precognitive ESP of the type allegedly shown by Shackleton would be as follows :

'Imagine a radioactive sample of high activity, plus a scintillation counter with ring-of-five scaling circuit and indicator lamps corresponding to Soal's five animal symbols. An accurate timing circuit turns off the counter at set intervals. The circuitry is wired in such open fashion that inspection is easy. The apparatus is battery-powered and is placed in a shielded case, with nothing penetrating through the shield except windows to show the indicators. The percipient and the telepathic sender can be wherever in the world they wish, together or far apart, in the same room with the apparatus or across the ocean from it, alone or with whatever company they want. The guesses of the percipient (transmitted via radio or cable, if necessary) are indicated in some visible form, and a single motion-picture camera records both guesses and subsequent "calls" of the number generator.'

Dr Price ends by expressing the recommendation that, until a demonstration on one of the lines suggested by him is provided, his fellow-scientists should join with him in withholding belief.

DR SOAL'S REPLY

I have read with some amazement an article on 'Science and the Supernatural' in the August number of *Science*. In this paper the author suggests fraudulent collusion between the chief experimenter (presumably myself) and a number of highly respectable people as an explanation of the significant results obtained in the card-guessing work carried out with Mr Basil Shackleton and Mrs Gloria Stewart reported by Mr Bateman and myself in *Modern Experiments in Telepathy*. (London, Faber and Faber ; New Haven, Yale University Press : 1954). Moreover, Dr Price makes these suggestions without being able to produce the least fragment of factual evidence that any such fraudu-

lent mal-practice ever took place. It is, I think, safe to say that no English scientific journal would have published such a diatribe of unsupported conjecture. *Nature*, the leading English scientific weekly, has nothing but praise for our work.

Dr Price begins by saying that 'in his early work as a psychic investigator, Soal published excellent papers reporting negative findings and showed himself to be a meticulous and ingenious experimenter, expert at uncovering trickery.' But every competent critic has admitted that the Shackleton experiments, for instance, were on a higher level of technical efficiency than any of the earlier 1924-1939 card-guessing experiments. In the earlier work, for example, the guesser and sender were in the same room separated only by a screen whereas elaborate precautions were taken in the later work to eliminate all sensory cues. Apparently Dr Price considers the early experiments to be 'excellent' merely because they produced only negative findings. In much the same way critics hostile to extra-sensory perception pronounced Coover's very defective experiments to be 'a notable example of painstaking, thorough research and exact treatment of numerical data.' There is little doubt that had Coover obtained positive results of high significance his experimental methods would have been described in far less flattering terms.

It is very significant and somewhat comforting to learn that Dr Price admits that 'most of Soal's work' cannot be accounted for by any combination of statistical artifact and sensory leakage. He is convinced, for instance, of the inadequacy of Rawcliffe's theory of 'double whispering' in disposing of the Shackleton results or of Mr Spencer Brown's suggestion that the extra-chance scores are due to non-randomness in the target series or to defects in probability theory.

He is therefore driven in the last resort to suggest that the experimenters have deliberately organized fraudulent techniques which have been successfully practised in the case of Mrs Stewart over a period of four years without detection by the numerous academic people who have taken part in the experiments. In taking this attitude Dr Price would appear to be trading on the prejudice and hostility which a majority of American scientists bear towards the subject of telepathy. In England the attitude of scientific men and philosophers is far more tolerant and open-minded, and such an attack as that of Dr Price would be considered grossly unfair unless he could produce actual evidence that cheating had taken place.

Dr Price has suggested several methods by which the experiments could have been faked. I propose to examine these suggestions in some detail.

In at least three of the procedures described the agent or sender and the percipient (as well as EA the principal experimenter) are in the trick. The agent, sitting behind the screen arranges the five animal cards in an order which has been decided beforehand by (EA) the principal experimenter. Or in another variation the agent lays out the cards in any order and communicates this order to (EA) on the other

side of the screen by means of some code concealed in a phrase such as 'I am now ready', etc. (EA) then communicates this order (or certain partial constituents of it) to the percipient in the next room by means of a code contained in some common-place phrase. The percipient who is in collusion with (EA) has previously memorized certain numbers chosen by (EA) from certain key positions of his list of random numbers. As (EA) calls aloud the serial numbers of the 25 guesses the percipient decodes the numbers in the key positions into the corresponding initials of the animals' names.

Dr Price goes to great length in devising variations on this theme but they all depend on the Agent being in collusion with the chief experimenter or with the percipient. Now four of the agents with whom Mrs Stewart was highly successful were lecturers of academic standing at Queen Mary College in the University of London. Two were senior lecturers and the other two mathematicians who had done distinguished creative work. A fifth agent who was brilliantly successful over a long period was a senior civil servant, in fact an assistant director of mathematical examinations in the Civil Service. Now it is plausible to suppose that I, as principal experimenter, could persuade any of these men to enter into a stupid and pointless collusion to fake the experiments over a period of years? What had any of them to gain from such deplorable conduct? Had I gone to any of them and suggested (as Dr Price recommends) that in a good cause a little deception would do no harm I know quite plainly that the result would have been a first-class scandal in University circles. These men had no burning desire to prove extra-sensory perception and no religious axes to grind. They had everything to lose by besmirching their academic reputations. Their only motive was scientific curiosity. It is idle therefore for Dr Price to assume that these five agents would consent to arrange the cards at the bidding of myself or deliberately to communicate the code either to myself or to the percipient, Mrs Stewart. Certainly you might find obscure people with no conscience who would, if they were paid for doing it, assist in faking an experiment, but not in the ranks of University lecturers.

If then, these agents were not in the trick, how did (EA) get hold of the code in order to communicate it to Mrs Stewart? Since in many such experiments another academic man was sitting by Mrs Stewart handing her numbered record sheets to fill in one by one, it would be clearly too late for her to receive the code *after* her 50 guesses had been completed. Nor could she draw prepared lists of guesses from a drawer since there was no accessible drawer at the table where she sat and even had there been one her every movement was under observation by the academic man sitting beside her. (EA) might of course *ask* the agent innocently for the order of the code at the commencement of each run of 50 guesses, but all the agents would swear emphatically that no such thing ever happened and that during a run (EA) never left his own side of the screen. Moreover, asking for the code would excite immediate suspicion. Dr Price has made the suggestion that

(EA) looking through the hole in the screen might see the reflection of the five cards in the agent's spectacles. But with the lighting of the room as it was and the position of the hole and the size of the box it can easily be verified that such a thing would be impossible. I have always been on guard against reflections in card experiments and as the main object of my set-up was to ensure that (EA) who gave the signals to Shackleton or Mrs Stewart should have no knowledge of what card the agent was looking at, I naturally took special precautions to see that reflections in spectacles, window panes, etc. were impossible. I am ready to demonstrate to anyone that the spectacles theory is an erroneous one under our particular conditions.

If then the agent is not in the trick it would appear to be impossible for the code to have been communicated to Mrs Stewart until she had recorded her guesses. I could cite large numbers of highly successful experiments in which both the agent and the person who sat with Mrs Stewart were people of academic standing. Let me give only two examples.

At sitting No. 52 on 23 April 1948, Dr Louise Morgan, a well-known journalist on the staff of the *News Chronicle*, visited us for the first time and took part as Agent. Dr Brendel of Queen Mary College sat by Mrs Stewart for the whole time while she was making her guesses. The checking of scores was done by Dr Brendel watched by Dr Morgan and a Mr R. A. M. Kearney, B.A., a mathematician. Mrs Stewart made a score of 109 hits in 400 guesses. This gives an excess over chance expectation of more than 3.5 standard deviations. Now no-one will suggest that I could be such a fool as to attempt a collusion with Dr Morgan. If I had done so I should have seen my name in letters of infamy in next morning's *News Chronicle*.

And here is an experiment in Pure Telepathy in which Mr Rozelaar of Queen Mary College was the agent. In this case no actual cards were used but the agent imagined a code to be printed on five blank pieces of paper and did not divulge it until Mrs Stewart's guess sheet was safely in the hands of Mr Bateman, M.Sc. (Assistant Director of Examinations to the Civil Service Commission) who sat by Mrs Stewart. On 200 trials she obtained 60 hits — the equivalent of 3.5 standard deviations. Here there was no question of (EA) (myself) reading the code in Rozelaar's glasses. (Actually at that time he did not wear spectacles.) And as I have said, it would be absurd to suppose that a Senior lecturer of London University would lower himself to assist in faking an experiment. Rozelaar had no connection whatever with any psychical organization. The guesses were decoded by Mr Bateman checked by Mrs Hales (a highly respectable professional pianist) and Mr Rozelaar himself checked me as I called aloud Mrs Stewart's guesses.

I could multiply examples of experiments of this kind.

Moreover, Mrs Stewart was successful with 15 agents out of 30 that were tried. Dr Price's assumption of collusion between myself and fellow lecturers of London University has no basis in reality and is a

fantastic product of his own imagination. Many people would consider such an hypothesis to be more improbable than the existence of telepathy itself, for which there is a vast amount of spontaneous evidence of good quality quite apart from card-guessing. Indeed, in formulating his themes of collusion Dr Price has not taken sufficiently into account the high quality of the personnel connected with these experiments. Nor has he any acquaintance with the mentalities of the percipients themselves. No-one, for instance, who knew Shackleton would credit him with the ability to memorize accurately certain random numbers located in varying key positions in as many as twelve or sixteen columns, and in addition to transpose these numbers into code letters at the rate of one every two seconds. I should experience the greatest difficulty in performing such a task myself even at the normal rate of calling while at the rapid rate of a call every second I should find the thing impossible. With an observer watching every movement I should be unable to pull from my pocket any lists with which to refresh my memory. And to have to carry out such a nerve-racking performance week after week would be intolerable.

Then again the reproduction of the many subtle position effects described in Chapter XIX of *Modern Experiments in Telepathy* would be very difficult to fake.

In certain of the Shackleton experiments the lists of random numbers were prepared by Dr Wassermann, a mathematical physicist, and I had no opportunity of seeing them until the experiment was over. Most people in England who know Dr Wassermann would have little doubt about the sort of reaction that would be induced in him by a request to assist in faking an experiment.

Dr Price evidently thinks that extra-sensory perception should be established once for all by an absolutely fraud-proof cast-iron experiment. The late Dr F. C. S. Schiller, the Oxford philosopher, used to argue that such a hope was illusory. Even were such an experiment feasible, we should find that as the years passed and the experiment faded into history fresh doubts would begin to be raised about the reliability of the experimenters or the possibilities of collusion. Another experiment would then be necessary, and the arguments would begin all over again. On this question I am in agreement with Schiller, and I favour a quite different method of approach.

The main obstacle to the acceptance of parapsychological phenomena is the apparent rarity of the people who can produce them under even reasonable conditions of control. Now this rarity I believe to be apparent rather than real. We do not know the signs by which to distinguish these exceptional card-guessers, and so we waste time and effort in testing the wrong kind of people. There is increasing reason to believe that we shall not discover them in University populations and that it is a waste of time to experiment with students. But experience of the last few months has indicated that it is among the less sophisticated types that we should prosecute our search—especially among children living in rural communities or in backward countries.

I think there is little doubt that with an increasing number of such high-scoring subjects much of the prejudice of ordinary scientific workers will disappear. When more and more competent experimenters report on cases of high-scoring subjects, the hypothesis of collusion will become as extinct as the dodo. For while it is, in the last resort, possible to suggest that two or three experimenters have faked their results, this will not be possible when scores of competent investigators produce their reports on similar cases. I suggest to Dr Price, therefore, that efforts should be directed towards the discovery of the personality characteristics of these people who make averages of 8 or 10 hits per 25 over considerable periods, the sort of communities in which they may be successfully found, and so on. In other words, we should aim at repeatability by more and more investigators.

NOTES ON THE CAMBRIDGE CONFERENCE ON SPONTANEOUS PHENOMENA

THE International Conference held at Newnham College, Cambridge, in July was the first occasion on which this Society has acted as host for such a Conference during the whole of its existence. It was convened in pursuance of recommendations made at the larger International Conference at Utrecht in 1953 with a view to reviving the study of the spontaneous phenomena of psychical research. The cost was generously borne by the Parapsychology Foundation of New York. It was very fortunate that it could be held in Newnham, a place with interesting historical associations for students of psychical research. The arrangements made by the College authorities for the accommodation of the delegates left nothing to be desired, and, the weather being fine throughout, the use of the beautiful garden was greatly appreciated. Apart from the much regretted absence of Mrs Eileen Garrett, the President of Honour, owing to illness, the Conference was a great success. Rather more than thirty delegates and observers attended from ten countries.

The Conference was planned as one to which comparatively few delegates should be invited, all being persons actively concerned with spontaneous cases, who could therefore discuss their problems with a freedom impossible in a larger body, and with better prospects of arriving at practical conclusions for the further promotion of this branch of our subject. For the same reason the press were not invited to report the proceedings. There are other occasions on which the Society would welcome the presence of representatives of the press, and would in fact be very glad if they would make better use of the opportunities so offered them.

The programme was planned by a Committee of the Society in consultation with Professor Gardner Murphy, who advises the Foundation on matters of research. It was designed to provide a series of discussions to cover all the principal types of spontaneous investigation (apparitions, 'ESP projection', haunts and poltergeists). Opportunities would be given for considering how far the traditional methods of investigation were valid and essential, and also how far it would be possible to supplement them by more experiment and by further use of psychological techniques that have been developed since the classic days of 'Phantasms of the Living' and the 'Census of Hallucinations'. This programme was substantially carried out, with the addition of papers which had been offered by eminent delegates since the programme had first been formulated. A list of the titles of discussions and persons who introduced them has been printed in the September issue of the *Journal*.¹

It is impossible here to give an account of all the papers, many of great interest, read at the Conference, but it may be of interest to record a few salient points. In his opening address Professor Gardner Murphy emphasized the importance of keeping spontaneous phenomena as part of the programme of psychical research. He reprobated the tendency noticeable in some quarters to apply to them the derogatory term 'anecdotal'. He pressed for the collection of a large number of new cases, and expressed the view that persons should be specially trained to conduct this sort of investigation. Throughout the Conference the importance was stressed of the proper authentication of cases, and tributes were paid to the care and thoroughness of the early generation of psychical researchers.

It is natural that the psychological background of spontaneous cases and the possible psychological motivation of persons concerned in them should nowadays be considered as requiring closer study than in the early days before modern techniques had developed. It seemed a few years ago as if there might be a rift between psychical researchers pursuing their traditional method and the followers of some schools of psychology who claimed that their method of analysis was by itself sufficient for the investigation of spontaneous cases. The Cambridge discussions, however, afford good ground for the belief that psychical researchers and psychologists can co-operate in working out a method of investigation satisfactory to both parties, one involving no departure from the standards of strict verification on which our Society has always insisted. A proposal to make this co-operation effective was

¹ See 'News and Notes', pp. 155-6.

incorporated in one of the resolutions passed at the end of the Conference.

Another resolution recommended an international effort for the conduct of what may roughly be described as a new Census of Hallucinations. That such a project, if well designed and competently carried out, would be of the greatest advantage to psychical research will be disputed by few, but it is obviously a very ambitious undertaking which would require the most careful planning and the employment of a large number of trained investigators for its execution. The suggestion is that the first steps towards the international project should be taken by the American S.P.R. and our own Society in collaboration.

The Parapsychology Foundation, it is understood, contemplates the issue of a volume containing summaries of all the papers read at Cambridge.

W. H. S.

FIFTY POUNDS PRIZE ESSAY

REPORT OF THE JUDGES

It was made known last autumn through the medium of this and certain other scientific journals that a member of the Society, who wished to remain anonymous, had offered a prize of £50 for an essay on psychical research. The closing date for entries was 30 June 1955. Thirty-two entries were received—an encouraging number—and some were of high standard. The rule about pseudonyms was well observed.

The winner of the fifty pounds is MR WM EDWARD COX, of Southern Pines, North Carolina, U.S.A., and his paper is entitled 'The Influence of "Applied Psi" upon the Sex of Offspring'. In our opinion Mr Cox has presented a stimulating original idea, backed up by a painstaking and thorough piece of research. The essay is written in a lively and readable manner, and the author has shown the right amount of caution in the interpretation of his data.

On behalf of the anonymous donor and of the Society, we wish to thank all those who submitted essays.

H. H. PRICE
DENYS PARSONS
D. J. WEST

REVIEWS

INTRUSIONS? By J. W. Dunne. London, Faber, 1955. 159 pp. 12s. 6d.

Dunne was working on this book at the time of his death in 1949. It is unfortunately incomplete. In an introduction, the author claims to have discovered a new fact of the greatest possible importance; and later (p. 64) there are mentions of other new ideas; but we are never given the promised explanation of these.

The book consists of three parts. In the first, the theory of Serialism is restated, in much the same way as in previous books, but with some parts of the argument brought out more clearly. The demonstration that mind and brain are not the same (pp. 17-23) is new and striking. It follows from this that the mind must both supply and receive physical energy (pp. 23, 62). Proceeding, Dunne arrives at the idea of a Universal Mind, covering the whole field of human experience (and also the experience of any other forms of conscious life). So far we are on familiar ground. The author now considers the question of intervention by the Universal Mind, and reaches the conclusion that it can and does intervene. This, if a fact, is certainly of the greatest importance; but it is not a new development of Serialism, and was included in Dunne's first statement of the theory in 1927.

He goes on to describe some experiences of his own—mediumistic, waking, and dreaming—which he considers to be examples of such 'intrusions' by the Universal Mind, and which helped him in working out his theory. Some of these are very impressive. It does not appear that Dunne ever compared them with similar experiences of others, of which there are a large number on record. The dreams, for instance, are mainly of the 'solution' type, and the dream of the stopped watch (pp. 108-9) is specially worth study from this point of view; but it seems (p. 91) that the author had not heard of other examples of this type. 'The occurrences', he says, 'showed certain very marked characteristics, so that if we decide, on the score of probability, that they were genuine intrusions, their description will serve as some kind of criterion to which we may submit other experiences posturing as intrusions' (p. 83). But the criteria suggested (p. 107) would not be accepted by most investigators.

It was at one time thought that precognitive dreams tended to be specially impressive or vivid, or to contain some kind of message or indication of their premonitory character. Dunne himself was the first to contest this, and to show that precognitions could equally well be found in the trivial, easily-forgotten, normal dream.

It is only by examining the content of the dream that one can decide if it is veridical ; and the same applies to mediumistic and other experiences. So it is, too, with the inspiration of the thinker or artist. Sometimes the new idea announces itself dramatically, sometimes it creeps in imperceptibly ; sometimes it is true and important, sometimes false or trivial ; but there is no correlation between these aspects. If Dunne's general theory is correct, *all* genuine inspirations are 'intrusions' by the Universal Mind, whatever may be the manner of their arrival.

The book concludes with an Appendix concerned with the velocity of the 'now'. This was previously dealt with in *The Serial Universe*, but the argument has been rehandled. The same conclusion as before is reached—that the velocity of the 'now' is equal to the velocity of light. Only a mathematician could comment usefully on this ; but it is a remarkable evidence of the wide scope of Dunne's theory of Serialism that it takes in relativity as well as religion and psychology, and that both 'E=mc²' and 'Thou art That' find their place among its corollaries.

G. F. DALTON

EXPERIMENTS ON THE POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOIL RESISTIVITY AND DOWSING ZONES. By S. W. Tromp. Leiden, Foundation for the Study of Psycho-Physics, 1955.

As an introduction to some new results Dr Tromp first gives a summary of some of his earlier work on dowsing phenomena, published in his book *Psychical Physics* and, in order to circumvent some of the prejudices adhering to the word 'dowsing', he replaces it by the term 'muscle-tonus-reflex', abbreviated to M.T.R. Some people may object to this as mere terminological jugglery, but it may well be that the introduction of an emotionally neutral, biologically significant 'terminus technicus' will facilitate an objective discussion of the phenomena in question.

The aim of the present work was to find a convenient method for diagnosing geophysical discontinuities in the sub-soil, and to find out whether the discontinuities thus discovered coincided in any way with the 'dowsing zones' detected by dowsers working with rod or pendulum over the same ground. The method chosen was to measure the variation in the electrical resistivity of the soil along a given line in the field—a technique which is well known in geophysical investigations. This method of detecting discontinuities in the sub-soil had also been used by others working on the geophysics of dowsing, and Dr Tromp gives a brief critique of this work. His own results establish that there exists a certain degree of correlation between the location of zones of high

resistivity gradient in the sub-soil and M.T.R. zones located by dowsers. The M.T.R. zones are usually found at or near a minimum in the soil resistivity curve, taken at a depth of about 2 metres, hardly ever near a maximum. The converse is not true: many resistivity minima are not associated with M.T.R. zones. The author discusses critically the various factors which may affect the results of these experiments, and gives some rules which need to be observed if one is to obtain good correlations, all of which seem reasonable enough. The evidence for Dr Tromp's conclusions is documented by a large number of diagrams showing soil resistivity curves and the location of M.T.R. zones established along the same line in the field by dowsers. One point which could with advantage have been discussed more fully is the influence of the depth of the discontinuity on the M.T.R. of the dowser—but obviously this is a very awkward problem. Dr Tromp's results are generally supported by those of some German workers which are given in an Appendix. It is also shown that there seems to be some statistically significant evidence indicating that lightning strikes most frequently in M.T.R. zones, and that there is a certain amount of qualitative evidence indicating that the growth of certain plants seems to be strongly inhibited in M.T.R. zones, although the same plants will grow satisfactorily on the same soil closely adjacent to, but outside, the M.T.R. zones.

Dr Tromp does not go beyond (a) claiming to have established the objective validity of the dowsing phenomenon as a biological response *sui generis*, and (b) showing that the response is evoked by a cause the location of which coincides frequently with geophysical discontinuities in the sub-soil which can be located objectively by measurements of soil resistivity.

In the reviewer's opinion both claims have been sufficiently well established to provoke further study of the subject. This would be highly desirable because much more information is required on the correlation between M.T.R. phenomena and the objectively measurable properties of matter before we can hope to formulate a causal theory of these phenomena in terms of current physico-chemical concepts.

P. H. PLESCH

JOURNAL OF PARAPSYCHOLOGY. Durham, N. C., Duke University Press. \$1.50.

VOL. 19, NO. 1, MARCH 1955.

Mrs Rhine's study of spontaneous cases has reached the interesting stage of an enquiry into how far these are stories of human intervention apparently averting a pre-cognised future

event. By using severe criteria of acceptability, she reduces such stories to a small number but there is a residuum of narratives of this kind which she gives in full and of which she discusses the implications. She does not, of course, regard these stories as proving that an event precognised can be avoided by human intervention ; she recognises them as being of the limited evidential value of all material based on reports of spontaneous cases. Nevertheless, she discusses the very proper question of how such intervention could be explained if it were proved to occur.

Mrs Rhine finds a difficulty in such explanation which she expresses in the words : 'If precognition be understood to mean the foreseeing of a future *that is bound to occur*, then that future by idefinition could not be averted.' I think the alleged difficulty is less serious than is implied by Mrs Rhine's phrase 'the rational mind reaches an impasse', and is largely the result of taking a definition too seriously. The proposition is clearly self-evident if 'precognition' is so defined but there is no necessity so to define it. If one does, then one must use a new word instead of 'precognition' for the foreseeing of an event which can be altered by human intervention. Always our language must be adapted to what is the case ; we can never hope to discover what is the case by studying the implications of our language. Nor does it seem to be true that such redefining would 'necessitate the altering of established concepts of causality and time' since the situation is a familiar one in every-day life and is not peculiar to paranormal cognition. Anyone of us may say to his wife, 'The saucepan is just going to boil over' (basing his prediction on rational inference from normal perception) without feeling any disturbance to his concepts of causality and time if she then prevents it from boiling over by turning down the gas.

G. L. Magnan reports a precognition test he has carried out with some new refinements. The subject had previously shown +1 displacement in an ESP test and continued to show displacement of the same kind in a precognition test to an extent which was satisfactorily significant ($\cdot 01 > P > \cdot 001$).

H. Forwald reports a placement PK experiment in which there was alternation between intention and non-intention to place the dice. A significant difference was found between the two experimental conditions in favour of that with intention to place. The series without intention showed no total deviation from chance expectation although position effects suggested a complementary relation to the results with intention. If this finding is confirmed, it will suggest an interesting parallelism with Richmond's PK experiments on *paramecia*.

Mr Salter comments on Myer's *Human Personality* on the occasion of its reprinting by the Parapsychology Foundation.

Tyrrell's last book on *The Nature of Human Personality* is reviewed by Professor Ducasse with regretful severity.

VOL. 19, No. 2, JUNE 1955.

Mr Van Bussbach reports further ESP experiments with school children. Although he obtained significant successes with primary school children, experiments with secondary school children gave only chance results. This suggests the interesting possibility that secondary schooling inhibits ESP capacities but the conditions of the experiment do not seem to rule out the possibility that he happened by chance to have a batch of primary school children whose social conditions were favourable to ESP scoring. A further finding that the primary school children scored best with their teacher as sender is rendered doubtful by the defective design of the experiment, since the teacher was also always the first of three senders.

Dr Osis contributes a report on a precognition experiment with a single subject who scored significantly (but negatively) whether the interval between the precognition and its fulfilment was long or short.

Dr Rose reports further experiments with Australian aborigines. Again he obtained strongly significant results in ESP experiments but only chance results in PK experiments. Unlike his earlier results, these ESP successes were contributed by a large number of his subjects, more than half obtaining significant positive deviations. It would be unsafe to conclude that members of a primitive culture are better at ESP tests than civilised people; it may be that Dr Rose is an unusually good ESP experimenter. Further research is obviously desirable.

Dr Rhine's Editorial on Present Impasses in Parapsychology is based on a paper by him heard by many of the members of the S.P.R. when he was in London. The impasses to which he refers are: the general social resistance to parapsychological findings and the failure to advance in solving the problems of telepathy, of the spirit hypothesis, and of psi control. Professor Rhine refers to these situations rather pessimistically as 'checkmates', but he is not, I believe, a chess player and probably only means 'checks'.

Dr Eisenbud makes a vigorous contribution to Mrs Rhine's work on precognition by suggesting an element of aggression in the precognitions of disasters.

There are reviews of Dr Matthews's book *Bird Navigation* by

Dr Pratt, of Robert Amadou's *La Parapsychologie* by Dr West, and of C. C. L. Gregory's and A. Kohsen's *Physical and Psychical Research* by Dr Eisenbud.

R. H. THOULESS

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

New York, A.S.P.R. \$1.50.

VOL. 49, NO. 1, JANUARY 1955.

The greater part of the January issue is devoted to an important paper by Betty M. Humphrey and J. Fraser Nicol, entitled: 'The Feeling of Success in ESP'. The sponsorship of the research project is interesting; the earlier work, conducted while the authors were research associates at the Parapsychology Laboratory, Duke University, was assisted by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. The later work and assessment was supported by grants from the American Society for Psychical Research and from the Parapsychology Foundation, New York.

The authors recall the conviction expressed by certain percipients in spontaneous cases of the genuineness of the psi experience. 'I could not doubt that what I had seen was real.' In contrast it had usually been claimed that the percipient in laboratory experiments never knew when he was right or wrong. Humphrey and Nicol set out to investigate this problem of subjects' awareness of trial-to-trial success or failure in ESP tests.

In addition to trying to call the symbol on the target card, the subject was asked to call out the word 'check' on trials where he felt sure he was right. Subjects were urged to call between 5 and 10 'checks' per run. In one series, denoted as 'Known' runs, the subject was shown the card after each trial; in the Unknown runs, he only learnt his score at the end of the run.

Humphrey and Nicol's findings, which are followed by a most interesting analysis and discussion, are given in full below.

1. In the standard or Unknown type of ESP test, if the subjects accept the experimenters' advice and call out the word 'Check' between five and ten times per run of 25 calls, there is a substantial chance that they will say 'Check' proportionately more often on their correct ESP calls than on their incorrect ones. Or, in different form, though it comes to the same thing, if a subject has just called a correct ESP symbol, he is relatively more likely to say 'Check' *then* than if he had called the wrong ESP symbol; in the latter case he tends *not* to say 'Check'. This effect was significant for both the 1952 and 1953 series. For their pooled total the results are highly significant with a probability of about 3 in 10,000.

2. This ability to say 'Check' relatively more often after hits than

after misses was found to be concentrated in the group of *unconfident* subjects in both series (P for the total = .0006). Confident subjects, on the other hand, seemed unable to distinguish between their hits and misses.

3. Subjects who were rated emotionally unstable also appeared to be gifted at saying 'Check' at the right time and at refraining from saying it at the wrong time. For the total of both series their results were such as would be expected by chance less than twice in a thousand such series. But the emotionally stable subjects were less successful in putting their 'Checks' in the right places. Their combined results give a probability of .04.

4. In the Known type of ESP test where each card was seen by the subject immediately after it was guessed, the results were generally uninteresting and statistically insignificant. Some remarks will be made later suggesting possible reasons for the failure of subjects to use their 'Checks' effectively in this type of ESP test.

5. Subjects who gave less than the five-check minimum requested by the experimenters were completely unsuccessful in distinguishing between their hits and misses in both series. The few subjects who over-checked also gave uninteresting results.

The January issue also contains a review by Professor C. J. Ducasse of *Ghosts and Poltergeists* by Herbert J. Thurston, S.J., and a review by J. L. Woodruff of *Psychical Research Today* by D. J. West.

VOL. 49, No. 2, APRIL 1955.

A seventeen-page paper by Professor C. D. Broad on 'The Phenomenology of Mrs Leonard's Mediumship' probes the fascinating problem of the precise nature and status of the 'Communicators' and of the 'Direct Voice'. The latter phenomenon Professor Broad cautiously prefers to call 'Ostensibly Independent Speech'. The paper contains an interesting comparison of the medium's well-known Feda personality with some of the classical cases of multiple personality.

The April issue also contains a review by Professor Ducasse of Robert Amadou's *La Parapsychologie*, a note on the 'Influence of Weather Conditions on Parapsychological Experiments' by S. W. Tromp, and a note on the phenomenon of negative deviations in ESP tests by Carroll B. Nash.

VOL. 49, No. 3, JULY 1955.

Dr Gardner Murphy in 'Plans for Research on Spontaneous Cases' foreshadows plans on a very broad front for the collection, study, and analysis of spontaneous cases, a project with which the

July 1955 Conference at Cambridge was also much concerned. Dr Murphy makes an eloquent appeal for manpower. 'What we need above all else are eager participants who begin to catch the importance of a broad survey of these broad powers of human personality, who are aware that a profoundly revolutionary conception of human nature will come when unconscious interpersonal dynamics are more fully understood, and who realize that parapsychology is one of the major neglected areas, the study of which might give us a fuller understanding of the nature of man.'

Dr R. A. McConnell of the Biophysics Department, University of Pittsburgh, presents an investigation of PK during natural sleep using a motor-driven rotating-cage with the throws automatically photographed. Like all his work, this experiment was designed and carried out with meticulous care. The results were not statistically significant.

Dr Gertrude Schmeidler contributes a salutary reminder of the need for rigid testing conditions, and points out that even critical, detached, and intelligent observers may find that their senses deceive them in conditions where suggestion may be brought into play.

The remaining report is short but important. It relates five instances of precognition, and the importance lies in the perfect documentation of four of the instances. For the first time, as far as I am aware, in the history of psychical research, a percipient has actually followed the oft-repeated exhortation to record his precognitive dream on a postcard and post it before the fulfilment of the prediction. Mrs Mariann Dommeyer noticed that from time to time she dreamt of a certain symbol, and that such a dream was invariably followed by an unexpected gift of money. Five instances of the dream and sequel are lucidly presented by the percipient's husband, Professor Frederick C. Dommeyer of St Lawrence University, and members will find it fascinating reading. In each incident except the first Professor Dommeyer wrote an account of his wife's dream on one or more postcards and immediately mailed these to himself and to members of the A.S.P.R., thus getting dates and times stamped on the documents. The unexpected gift of money followed in four cases within a few hours, and in the fifth within 26 hours. Two of the incidents were precipitated artificially—money was posted for test purposes to Mrs Dommeyer by (a) a colleague and (b) Professor Ducasse.

There are weaknesses. It appears that Mrs Dommeyer not infrequently receives unexpected gifts of money from a generous and scattered family, and we are told of occasions when money was received unheralded by the dream. The acceptance by Mrs

Dommeyer of a friend's proffered nickel for a parking meter is a rather weak fulfilment of Instance No. 5. But if Mrs Dommeyer continues to dream, and if Professor Dommeyer continues his systematic recording of all dreams and of all money received, this may well build up into a classic case which, unlike the majority of precognition accounts in the literature, one will not be ashamed to quote.

In the same issue Professor C. J. Ducasse reviews Raynor C. Johnson's *The Imprisoned Splendour*.

VOL. 49, No. 4, OCTOBER 1955.

The problem of repeatability in experimental psychical research has long worried those working in the field. One aspect of it is dealt with in a long paper 'The Repeatability Problem in ESP-Personality Research' by J. Fraser Nicol and Betty M. Humphrey. The important conclusion is reached that correlations between ESP and personality factors may be predicted in future research *within limits*. Nicol and Humphrey express this as follows:

If groups of about 62 subjects at a time are drawn from the specified population [college students], the correlation of self-confidence with ESP will lie for 19 such groups out of 20 between the limits

$$r = +0.153 \text{ and } r = +0.581$$

The October issue also contains a short account of the Cambridge Conference on Spontaneous Phenomena of July 1955, and reviews of *New Dimensions of Deep Analysis* by Jan Ehrenwald, and of *Immortality: the Scientific Evidence* by Alson J. Smith.

DENYS PARSONS

CORRESPONDENCE

AN APPARENTLY PARANORMAL DREAM

SIR,—The following case of a dream which appears to contain information acquired by extra-sensory means was first mentioned to me verbally by Lady Harvey of Tasburgh, shortly after the dinner referred to below, at which she was present. I also know the dreamer, a distinguished British official who happened to be wintering in Rome, and to whom I shall refer as Sir John Horton, as he wishes to remain anonymous. The other persons mentioned are given their actual names.

At my request Sir John wrote the following account of his dream:

It has been suggested to me that I should record the following incident in case it should be of interest to the Society for Psychical Research.

Friends of ours, the Honourable G. G. R. and Mrs Rodd, live at Ansidonia on the Italian coast about 100 miles north of Rome. Among other activities they breed French bull dogs. Although my wife has visited them there I have never been to Ansidonia myself and I have only seen one of Mr and Mrs Rodd's dogs. This is a completely white French bull dog belonging to a colleague of mine living in Rome, Mr R. H. G. Edmonds. Although a dog-lover myself I had had only casual conversation with Mr and Mrs Rodd about their dogs.

We invited Mr and Mrs Rodd to dinner in Rome on Monday, February 21, 1955. The previous night I had a dream of which I can now only remember one incident, but I remember this quite clearly. I was walking through a wood and having lost the path was having difficulty in getting through the undergrowth when, on the other side of a bush, I saw a completely white French bull dog. I said to myself 'This must be one of the Rodds' bull dogs. I will put a penny on his head.' I cannot recall exactly what the purpose of this was but having recently returned from a visit to London I had (in my dream) some English pennies in my pocket, and reaching over the bush I duly placed one on the dog's head. The dog seemed pleased by this and jumped over the bush to join me. I do not remember what happened next.

The following evening at our dinner party I mentioned this dream to Mrs Rodd. She at once exclaimed, 'How very extraordinary! Because in a recent litter we had two dogs with a round black mark on the top of their heads and we have taken to referring to them as the two "penny on the heads".'

I had heard someone say that the Rodds had specialised in breeding pure white dogs. I remember this conversation because our informant explained that this was a very difficult thing to do because it tended to weaken the strain and some comparison was made with our own somewhat motley brindled English bull dogs. But at no time did I hear of their having any dogs which were all white except for a round mark on the top of the head: still less had I heard that they were in the habit of describing this mark as a 'penny'.

JOHN HORTON

Rome,

March 28, 1955.

Of this account Mrs Rodd wrote on March 31st, 1955: 'I confirm that this is correct. Rosemary Rodd.' It also tallies with the version given me verbally by Lady Harvey a few days after the dinner.

I then tried to make doubly sure that Sir John had not in fact been told about the puppy earlier and forgotten all about it, and I wrote both to him and to Mrs Rodd to re-check this. He answered: 'I asked Mr and Mrs Edmunds (referred to in my record) whether they had ever mentioned to me about the "penny

on the head'. They replied that neither of them had heard of it until they read my record.'

Mrs Rodd also wrote from Ansidonia that she had never had puppies in other litters with such marks on their heads, she had not seen Sir John between the birth of the puppy on August 5th, 1954, and the dinner in February when he recounted his dream, and Mrs Edmunds was their only link.

London, S.W.1

ROSALIND HEYWOOD

THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF 'RANDOMNESS'

SIR,—Mr Fraser Nicol, in his article contributed to this Journal for June 1955, has quoted statisticians as saying that 'randomness' cannot be precisely defined. The situation can be more properly summed up in the statement that all attempted definitions of 'randomness' turn out to be circular, or pretty nearly so. And it is of the utmost importance that this circularity should not be confounded with the 'vagueness' or imprecision which Mr Spencer Brown, in his article in *Nature* (25 July 1953), claimed to have detected in the concept of 'randomness' used in applied probability theory. Vagueness or imprecision would simply rule out any consistent treatment and should make us wonder, like Mr Spencer Brown, how 'present probability theory applied to science' keeps going 'as well as it does'. A certain kind of circularity or tautology in mathematics, on the other hand, is perfectly compatible with a rigorous theory of probability permitting a consistent application of the 'Laws of Great Numbers', i.e. the theorems of Bernoulli and Bayes.

As an instance of what a little circularity in our mathematical definitions of 'randomness' can accomplish, I refer to von Mises' well-known *Wahrscheinlichkeit, Statistik, und Wahrheit* (second edition, Julius Springer, Vienna, 1936). He lays down a condition he calls the 'principle of Excluded System' or 'principle of Indifference to Ordinal Selection' (*Stellungsauswahl*) the scope of which can be understood with the aid of a simple illustration provided by M. G. Kendall (*The Advanced Theory of Statistics*, Vol. I, Charles Griffin, 1943). Suppose we have a population of objects each of which bears only one of two characteristics denoted by 0 and 1 respectively. We draw members from the population taking care to replace each member after drawing. Then the definition of an irregular *Kollektiv* formulated by von Mises requires (a) that the proportion of 0's in the first n terms tends to a limit as

$n \rightarrow \infty$, a limit which may be called the probability of o in the *Kollektiv*; (b) that if a subsequence is picked out of the *Kollektiv* by some method which is independent of the *Kollektiv* (for instance, every 3rd member, every member following a o, etc.), the limit of the proportion of o's, as $n \rightarrow \infty$, in the subsequence is the same as the limit of o in the whole class; and this is true for every such subsequence. Von Mises attempts to meet the criticism that the phrase 'infinite class for which there is no intrinsic rule of construction' is meaningless or tautological. He points out that the Formalists in mathematical theory need not object so long as the phrase has *not* been shown to be self-contradictory and the Intuitionists in mathematical theory need not object so long as the character of the 'random series' (e.g. the process of drawing from the population of o's and 1's) is exhibited. After criticizing the Laplacean attempts to pass from their *a priori* definitions of probability to empirical frequencies and the '*Spielraum*' or 'Indifference' principle as formulated by von Kries, von Mises shows how his own theory can consistently derive the 'Laws of Great Numbers'.

Some circularity or tautology in our mathematical definitions of 'randomness', then, is perfectly compatible with a theory of probability which is as precise, consistent, and complete as A. A. Robb's Relativistic Geometry of a Conical Order or E. A. Milne's Kinematic Relativity. To suggest that the concept of 'randomness' is 'vague' in 'much the same way as the concept of physical simultaneity is vague', i.e. to suggest that our applied probability theories are in a sort of pre-Einsteinian stage, is misleading and misses the spirit of the modern postulational approaches to the problem. It is no less misleading to suppose that a resolutely empirical approach to 'randomness' will undermine the very foundation of the applied probability theory used in psychical research. It should be clearly realized that various forms of the Frequency theory of probability and various forms of the axiomatic theory of probability are almost completely equivalent for several practical purposes (H. Cramér, *Mathematical Methods of Statistics*, Princeton University Press, 1946, Chapter 13, section 5). The validity of the 'cross-check' method in psychical research has not been appreciably affected by Mr Spencer Brown's criticism. As Professor Broad has reminded us in this Journal (March 1955, pp. 22-3), in the Soal-Goldney experiments the sequence of guesses at the cards actually presented as the targets yielded a critical ratio of the order of over 13 while the same sequence of guesses matched against cards which were not presented as the targets yielded a critical ratio between 1 and 2. It is but fair to ask

whether experiments with random numbers have yielded comparable results. We have to reckon also with statistically significant relationships between changes in the subject's rate of scoring and changes in the experimental conditions.

C. T. K. CHARI

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NEWS AND NOTES

The Society's Oldest Member

We offer our warmest felicitations to Mr H. N. Ridley, C.M.G., F.R.S., whose hundredth birthday fell on 10 December. Mr Ridley joined the Society in 1882, the year of its foundation, and has always taken an active interest in its work. It was, indeed, only a few years ago that he sent us an account of a most instructive pseudo-psychical experience, written with typical care and attention to detail. It is in the field of botany that Mr Ridley is best known, for out of his experiments in Singapore, started nearly seventy years ago, grew the technique of treating and 'bleeding' rubber trees which is used to this day in the cultivated rubber industry.

B.B.C. Broadcasts

The events described in 'The Ardachie Case' (pp. 159-72) formed the basis of a broadcast on 6 August 1954 under the title of 'The Frightened Housekeeper'. At that time fictitious names were used for the location and for all the people concerned.

The latest broadcast of a case published by the Society took place on 15 November 1955. This was 'The Dieppe Raid Case', one of the most curious and striking cases which have come our way for many years, which was broadcast in the 'Our Day and Age' series under the title of 'Voices Crying Out'. 'Dorothy Norton' herself spoke briefly in the programme, which employed the same pseudonyms as were printed in the *Journal* report. The scripts of both features were written by Anthony Jacobs.

Perrott Studentship

Mr Trevor Hall's tenure of the Perrott Studentship in Psychical Research at Trinity College, Cambridge, has been renewed for a further year.

Notes on New Publications

The 'Association of the Friends of Parapsychology' recently founded in Buenos Aires (see 'News and Notes', June 1955) has

published the first number of its *Revista de Parapsicología*. Its contents include an article by the Editor, Dr J. Ricardo Musso, and others by Robert Amadou, Professor H. H. Price, Dr J. B. Rhine, and Dr Emilio Servadio reprinted from other journals.

In 1938, by arrangement with the Society, G. Bell & Sons published six volumes in a series with the general title of 'Psychical Experiences'. One of these, *Hypnosis : its meaning and practice* by Eric Cuddon, has just been re-issued with additional material including the text of the Hypnotism Act, 1952. Copies may be obtained from the Secretary of the Society, price 10s. 6d. (postage 4d.).

January 26 has been fixed as the publication date for *The Haunting of Borley Rectory* in both the *Proceedings* and the commercial editions. The price of the latter, to be published by Gerald Duckworth & Co., will be 16s.

An English edition of *Naturerklärung und Psyche* by C. G. Jung and W. Pauli has been published by Routledge & Kegan Paul under the title *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche* (16s.). Of the two papers which it contains, Dr Jung's 'Synchronicity : an Acausal Connecting Principle' has the closer bearing on our subject. It was discussed at length by Professor H. H. Price in his review of the Swiss edition of the book in the *Journal* for January 1953.

With Michaël Bouissou's *The Life of a Sensitive* (translated from the French) and Ronald Edwin's *Clock Without Hands*, Sidgwick and Jackson are starting a new series entitled 'The Psi Library'. Both books will be reviewed in a later issue of the *Journal*.

As we go to press we have received the first number (November-December) of a new review *La Tour Saint-Jacques*, to be published six times a year by Librairie Saint-Jacques-Saint-Germain, 53 rue Saint-Jacques, Paris (V). Edited by Robert Amadou, its field is 'le royaume de l'inconnu' in the widest sense, with a section, 'Bulletin de Parapsychologie', containing articles, notes, news, and book reviews on psychical research.

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